(a) whether Government of Punjab has proposed any new rail projects and the extension of the existing rail links; and

(b) if so, the details of each pending project and the action so far taken/ proposed to be taken by Railways in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Chief Minister, Punjab had requested for certain new line projects, details of which alongwith action taken thereon is as under:-

S.No.	Proposal	Action taken
1.	New line between Patti (On Amritsar-Khemkaran line) and Mallanwala (On Jalandhar-Ferozepur line)	Survey has been conducted for different alignments to connect the two lines from Ferozepur to Patti and Mallanwala Khas to Gharayala. The cost of Mallanwala Khas-Gharayala (25 Km) new line has been assessed as Rs. 147 crore. The survey report is under finalisation.
2	Rama Mandi-Maur Mandi new line	Survey has been completed for Rama Mandi-Maur Mandi new line as per which cost of 32 Km long line was assessed as Rs. 123 crore. Northern Railway has been asked to examine alternative alignment from Rama Mandi to Sadda Singhwala.

Overground and underground rail bridges in Maharashtra

2588. SHRI Y. P. TRIVEDI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals for construction of overground and underground rail bridges proposed by the State Government of Maharashtra and local bodies in the State that are pending with Government; and

(b) the number out of them which were cleared by Railways during last three years till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Only 7 (out of which 6 have recently been received) proposals are pending.

(b) Since 2007-08 till 2009-10, 11 firm proposals were sponsored by State Government for sanction on cost sharing basis, which have already been sanctioned in the Railway's respective Works Programmes. These are at different stages of planning and execution.

Commencement of work of Adarsh Railway Stations

2589. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has commenced the work to convert railway stations into Adarsh Railway Stations; and

(b) if so, the details of fund allocations for Tamil Nadu?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Development of railway station as Adarsh Station is undertaken through works sanctioned under Plan Head - Passenger Amenities. State-wise allocation of funds for this Plan Head is not maintained. However, allocation of funds under this Plan Head for Southern Railway, which covers the State of Tamil Nadu, is Rs. 7536.40 lakh for the year 2009-10.

High speed parcel train

2590. SHRI PARIMAL NATHWANI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Northern Railway is running a high speed parcel train from Tughlaqabad (Delhi) to Vapi (Gujarat);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Railways proposes to operate such trains in future on other sectors also; and

(d) if so, the details with destinations thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A superfast parcel express train service is operating from Tughlakabad (Delhi) to Vapi (Gujarat) and Howrah as a pilot project. Another such service is being planned between Tughlakabad to Royapuram under the pilot project. Efforts are being made to popularize the superfast parcel express train services.

Absorption of Act Apprentices

2591. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether on 1 July, 2009, General Manager, Southern Railway issued a notification to absorb Act Apprentices of Railway;

(b) whether on 14 October, 2009, Railways published a list of Act Apprentices in its website and directed them to join on 15 October, 2009;

(c) whether on 14 October, 2009, Southern Railway administration received directions to stop the recruitment; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) On 1.7.2009, Notification was issued by Southern Railway calling applications from amongst Course Completed Act Apprentices for their engagement as substitutes in Group D posts.